

CHRIST ON HIS THRONE.

O R,

Christs Church-government briefly
laid downe; and how it ought to
bee set up in all Christian Con-
gregations.

Resolved in fundry Cases of Conscience.

I E R. 6. 16.

*Thus saith the Lord; Stand ye in the wayes, and see and
aske for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk there-
in, and ye shall finde rest for your soules.*

L V K E 19. 27.

*But those mine Enemies, which would not that I should
raigne over them, bring them hither and slay them before me.*

Printed in the yeare 1640.

CHRIST

ON HIS

THRON

OR

Church-government brief

and down, and how it ought to

be kept up in all Christian Churches

and

Resolved in further Cases of Controversy

43

4 6

147

1747

Printed in the Year 1740.





THE PREFACE To the Reader.



I *t is an observation as true as antient, that such workes of God as are done immediatly by himfelfe alone, though for their excellent greatnesse farre surpassing not onely mans apprehension, but even admiration itfelfe, yet are done by him without any rubbe or difficulty at all. Such was that glorious and magnificall worke of Creation. But such workes as God doth by instrumentall meanes, as by man, the greater they be, the greater difficulties they are attended with, and meet with many impediments. And this is most seene in great and generall*

THE EPISTLE

Acts 15.16.

Ezra 5.6.
Nehem. 4.

nerall Reformations of Churches or States. Even Christ himselfe, The onely Potentate, the Mighty God, when hee came to restore and re-erect the Tabernacle of David, which was fallen downe, to wit, his spirituall Temple or Church, what opposition did hee meet withall? what sweat did it cost him, before hee could finish this glorious and wondrous worke? In which respect the Antients were wont to say, That God with his word alone created the world; but it cost the life of his onely begotten sonne to redeeme the world: for this was opposed by Devills and men. And so it was with the type of Redemption, Israels deliverance from Egypt, where Gods mighty wonders and plagues upon Egypt, found a proud and hard hearted Pharaoh; with his blinde Egyptians obstinately resisting to the very last. So in the reparation of the Temple in Jerusalem, there wanted not most malignant spirits, envious men, as Tarnai, Shether Boznai, Tobiah, and Sanballat, who

mocked

TO THE READER.

mocked and accused the Jews to the King, and by force sought to hinder the worke. And therefore can wee wonder, when in the proceeding of so great a worke of reformation as we see begun in our dayes (nothing inferior (all circumstances considered) to that deliverance from Egypt, or to the restauration of religion after Babylons captivity) difficulties and impediments both great and many have and doe interpose themselves? which when wee see wee should not be discouraged, for discouragement in such cases is an argument and consequent of a mind too much relying upon outward meanes, which while they prosper, they are as a good gale filling the sayles of our hope to attaine the wished Port. But when an adverse winde begins but to whistle a little up, we are afflicted, and are ready to cast away our hope, being left as a ship without an Anchor floating, and without a rudder driven with every winde, ready to bee split on every rocke or shelve. But in such a

*Cum reflavit
affligimur.
Cic.*

THE EPISTLE OF

case, we must, as in the first place look up unto God the great master of the winds, yea and mover of the mindes of the violent men: So herein behold and observe the beaten wayes of the Lord, how hee is pleased in all such great works to suffer himselfe and his people to bee opposed. And this he doth for speciall reasons, as to shew forth the deepe wisdom of his providence, in circumventing his adversaries, to crosse and thwart them even in these great and good workes. Which himselfe will have to be done, and certainly purposeth to accomplish, & which he calleth them unto, and commandeth them to doe, that so he may take them off from trusting in the outward meanes, though never so faire, and might teach them still and stedfastly to trust in his helpe, in his strength, in his faithfulness, and not to cease to call upon him and depend on his promise, who will certainly save, and fully answer the prayers of his people, and in the happy issue of the works that his glory may in all shine forth the more

TO THE READER.

more clearly, when nothing shall be left in man to glory in, but that we may give all the honour and praise of the worke to him alone.

Againe, in all such great workes of generall Reformation, especially of Religion, the difficulties prove to be the greater, by how much the vices and corruptions to be purged out (as we see in naturall bodies) are and have been of longer continuance, and such also as have received strength (under pretence at least) even from the Lawes themselves, and by universall consent of the whole State. Nor only this, but there is also in our natures a kinde of Antipathy against that purity and power of Religion, which ought to be the maine end that all true Reformations should aime at. And besides all this, although the corruptions be so grosse, and of so high a nature, as they proclaime themselves intollerable grievances, no longer to bee borne, but doe by a kinde of necessity presse to a Reformation: yet there stands

stands so great a gulfe in the way, as un-
till it be removed or so made up, as to be
made passable, it will be found no easie
matter to compasse so great a worke.
Now this gulfe is ignorance, and that
of a long standing, contracted partly
through a generall security and sloth,
and partly through the want of meanes,
while through the subtilty of the Pre-
lates, and cowardise of their inferiours,
the Light hath been put under a Bushel.
So as though the sense of our Egyptian
burthens hath at length let us see in a
great measure our misery, yea, and
though God in his great mercy hath put
into our hands such an opportunity of
Reformation, even armed with a kinde
of necessity to worke it: Yet how unre-
solved are many men of the manner and
measure of this Reformation, and what
God requires at our hands herein? Yet
can we not be otherwise perswaded, but
that all good men would joyne together,
quickly to goe through with this great
worke, did they but apprehend it to bee
as

TO THE READER.

as well a matter of Conscience, as of grievance. For which cause, I have in these straits of time, thought it one part of my duty which I owe unto Christ, and to his Church, to propound, and briefly to resolve (as God hath enabled me) some important Cases of Conscience, which (hoping they may conduce to the furthering of the great businesse now in agitation concerning Religion) I have adventured most humbly to recommend unto the serious consideration of this most just, sage and grave Senate, as to which not only I, but all the people of the Land doe owe our best service, and for whose happy successe of all their grave Counsels, we are all bound daily, and that in a more than ordinary manner to sollicite (as we still doe) the throne of Grace, that the Spirit of Christ may be abundantly poured forth upon this most Noble Assembly, in all wisdom, and understanding, and in all judgement, zeale, courage, constancy, unity, unanimity in the love of the Truth, that

a such

THE EPISTLE, &c.

such a perfect Reformation may be wrought as Christ at this time calleth for, as his word appointeth, as all Gods people every where thirst after, and as the whole Antichristian faction is afraid of, that so, when Christ alone shall be set upon his Throne over our soules, to rule us according to his word, and to dwell among us by his Spirit, the Kings throne may be for ever established in justice and judgement, and Gods people in this Land may enjoy both inward and outward peace unto the day of Christ, and so our posterity after us may blesse God, and for ever call this Parliament, The blessed Parliament.



Let the Reader correct as here he sees cause.

Errata.

PAge 4. line 1. read 3. hundred. l. 11. blot out 1.
p. 6. l. 12. r. possibly be. l. 20. r. as is usual. p. 7. l. 10.
r. may be proved. p. 11. l. 19. r. truly ancient. p. 16.
l. 8. r. order sake. l. ult. r. of false. p. 20. l. 10. r. of Pre-
lates. p. 26. l. 11. r. forme of Liturgie. p. 24. r. in the
Test. l. 26. r. Commandements of men. p. 28. l.
23. r. grievances. p. 31. l. 18. r. accommodate. p. 34.
l. 11. r. and is surest. p. 38. l. 9. r. one of the way. p. 50.
l. 16. r. said Articles. p. 66. l. 4. r. and lay. p. 67. l. 14.
r. additions



And the number of the...

三

[illegible]

lip. 1. 1. 20 as Presbyters & Bishops
 Bishop & Presbyter.

Secondly, **CASES**
OF CONSCIENCE.

as out Diocesan mure and exer-
 cise is expressly forbidden by Christ
 him self, as Mark 10.

*Whether Diocesan Bishops (as
 they are commonly called) be
 by Divine right.*

THe answer is negative, They
 are not. The reasons are 1
First, Because the Scripture
 knoweth no such creatures as Dio-
 cesan Bishops, for the Bishops men-
 tioned in Scripture, are none other
 than Presbyters, whereof one or
 more were set over their several con-
 gregations respectively, as we clear-
 ly read, Tit. 1. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.
 So Acts 14. 23 compared with Phil.

lip. 1.1. So as Presbyters & Bishops in Scripture are convertible termes; every Presbyter a Bishop, and every Bishop a Presbyter.

Secondly, Because all such prelati-
ticall jurisdiction and domination
as our Diocesans usurpe and exer-
cise, is expressly forbidden by Christ
himselfe, as *Mat. 20. 25, 26. Mark. 10.*
42, 43. Luke 22. 25, 26.

Thirdly, Because the Apostles
condemned all such jurisdiction and
domination as our Prelats use: As
2 Cor. 1. 24. 2 Cor. 11. 20. 2 Thess. 2. 4.
1 Pet. 5. 3. 3 Joh. 9. 10.

Fourthly, Because Apostles them-
selves, whose successors Prelats pre-
tend to be, never used any such juris-
diction as the Prelats doe, neither in
Ordination of Ministers, nor in ex-
communication, (both which they
doe most grossly abuse) nor in ma-
king of Canons, or setting up or im-
posing of Ceremonies, both of meer
humane invention, which the Apo-
stles

files utterly condemned, *Gal. 4.9.10.*
Col. 2.8. &c.

Fifthly, Because the Prelats are neverable to prove by any demonstration from Scripture, that their jurisdiction is of Divine authority: their allegations are meere pervertings of scripture; as they alledge first, Christs ordaining twelve Apostles, and seventy Disciples; here was an inequality (say they) *Ergo* a superiority of jurisdiction. But neither can hee prove here any such authority, as they pretend, or much lesse any subordination of the seventy, unto the Twelve; for the Twelve neither ordained nor sent forth the Seventy. Secondly, they alledge the postscripts after the second Epistle to *Timothy*; and after that to *Titus*; which say, That those two were Bishops. But 'tis cleare, that those postscripts are no part of the Text, as *Bexa* well sheweth. Nor are they to be found in the vulgar Latine translation,

So D. Hall in
 his Booke of
 Episcopacie.

which was at the least an hundred
 yeares after Christ. *Timothy* and *Ti-
 tus* were both Evangelists, not resi-
 dent any where, but as the Apostles
 called them from Country to coun-
 try, as we read in *Paul's* Epistles: and
 if they were to bee called Bishops,
 according to the scripture, they must
 have beene Bishops over one Con-
 gregation respectively. Thirdly,
 they aledge those seven Angels, *1 Re-
 vel. 2 & 3*. These (say they) were se-
 ven Bishops. This they can never
 prove. And if Bishops, yet Dioce-
 sans they were not, seeing for some
 hundreds of yeares after, there were
 no such Diocesse extant. And our
 last Translation, in the contents of
 the second Chapter of the *Revelation*
 calls those Angels the Ministers of
 those Churches. And for the Angel
 to be meant of one single man, doth
 imply many absurdities, as that God
 should destroy a whole Church for
 one mans sake: for God threatneth
 the

207. Mark in
 his Book of
 Episcopates.

the Angell of Ephesus, if hee repent not, to remove his Candlesticke out of his place, to wit, that whole Church. But God never doth so; there is not in all the whole scripture any one example, that God ever rooted out a whole State or Church, generall or particular, for one mans sinne, be he Magistrate or Governor. And if God for one pretended Prelates sin, should remove or destroy a whole Church, as that of Ephesus; as there he threatens the Angell, who alone is charged with one onely sinne, which was a declination from his first love: Then what security or safety can the whole Church or State of England long promise to it selfe, so long as it harboreth in the bosome and bowels thereof such a crew and confederacy of most notorious and apostatised Prelates, who have not now declined in some degrees from the faith formerly professed, but have
 2107
 openly

openly oppressed and persecuted the Preachers and preaching of the Gospel, and that even unto blood? And againe, to goe about to proove the lawfulnessse of Prelacy by the Word of God, from a word of a darke and figurative signification, against cleer and expresse testimonies of Scripture to the contrary, is most absurd and too presumptuous. For, for Angell here to signifie a Prelate, cannot possibly, because the Scripture elsewhere (as before) damnethe all Prelacy in the Church of Christ. And there be many other reasons to confute them, that these Angells were no such Bishops, other than Scripture Bishops, as aforesaid: and that which was spoken to one, was by a Senechdochæ spoken to all, as is usually in Scripture, and cleare in all those seven Epistles.

Sixtly, The wisest and learnedest of the Prelats at this day among us, doe warily decline the Scripture in

this

this point, & dare not stand to their authority, as being point blanke against them: but they fly to Custom and antiquity, as the Papists doe for all their unwritten Traditions.



CASE II.

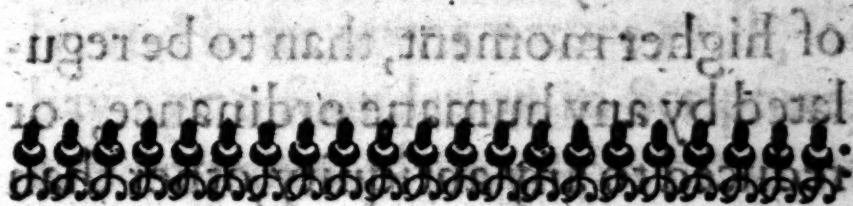
Whether the next Age immediately succeeding the Apostles, be not a sufficient warrant for Prelaticall jurisdiction, seeing it may be mooved (say they) that there were then Bishops.

THe Answer is negative: first, because it is not a sufficient warrant to build the government of the Church upon any Humaine example, which hath not expresse warrant from Gods Word. Secondly, Because those who were there called Bishops, cannot be proved to have been Diocesan Bishops,
or

2 Theff. 2. 7.

or to have had or exercised such a jurisdiction as our Prelates usurpe. Thirdly, could that be proved, yet being not according unto, but directly against the Scripture, we ought not to regard it. Fourthly, the very next age after the Apostles, produced many grosse errors and superstitions, as *Eusebius* tells us, and as the Apostles premonished, *Act. 20. 29.* yea, they complained of it in their own times, while they yet lived: For the mysterie of Iniquity (saith Paul) doth already worke, &c. which mysterie was, that of Prelacy, as appears clearely from that Text, where the Man of sin who exalts himself over the Church, is set forth as the head and top of that mysterie, namely of the Hierarchy, which is and hath been the ~~Lord~~ or source of all iniquity. And *Jerome* who lived in the fourth Century said, That Pretation over the rest of the Ministers, was a thing of humane presumption, and not
 10 of

of Divine Ordination: and though it was first devised for a remedy against schisme, yet it proved in time the greatest schisme that ever was, namely the schisme of Antichrist, and all his crew of Prelates from Christ; the Hierarchie being a meer enmity against Christs kingdome, betwene which two there is as great a Chasma or gulfe as betwene Paradise and Hell.



CASE. III.

But seeing Episcopacy is of very great and reverend antiquity (as they say) it is not best to reduce the present Prelacy to the antient condition of Bishops in the Primitive Church.

NO; unlesse they can proove these Bishops to be such as Gods Word alloweth. Wee

Mat. 19. 3.

reverence that antiquity which is joyned with verity : But antiquitie without verity is oldnesse of error, as said old *Tertullian*. When one asked *Christ*, *If it were lawfull for a man to put away his wife for every cause ?* *Christ* gave no indulgence at all, but reduced that antient abuse among the *Iewes*, to the primitive institution of *God* in *Paradise*.

Secondly, The matter in hand is of higher moment, than to be regulated by any humane ordinance, or reduced to any antiquity, other than the *Scripture* it selfe. For the thing here in question concernes no lesse than the honour of *Christs* Kingdome, and his royall prerogative in the government of his kingdome, as we shall further see.

Thirdly, that which is originally vicious, cannot by tract of time bee made good. Custome, we see, hath not made *Prelates* better, but worse and worse in all ages. An evil egge brings

brings forth an evill Bird. And Christ saith, *An evill tree cannot bring forth good fruit. And, Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be hewen downe and cast into the fire. And Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be plucked up by the roots. And, Either make the tree good, and the fruit good; or make the tree evill, and the fruit evill.* If therefore the tree of Prelacie be originally, and in its owne nature evill, as having no foundation in Scripture, as being none of Gods planting, it ought to be so far from being a patterne for its antiquity, as it ought utterly to be rooted up, as being a novelty, and not antiquity; for that only is truly currant, which is antiently true.

Mat. 7. 17.

Mat. 15. 13.

Mat. 12. 33.

CASE



CASE IV.

But if the Prelacy be plucked up and quite taken away, what government shall be left for the Church of God?

FOR resolution whereof wee are to consider these necessary things: First, That that Government alone be set forth, which Christ himselfe hath left us in his Word. For who but the King and Law-giver of his Church and kingdom of Graces should give Lawes, and appoint how it shall be governed? Secondly, we are not to think that Christ, who was the Law-giver of the Old Testament, was not also the Law-giver of the New, and hath left us sufficient direction therein for the government of his people both for faith and manners. Now

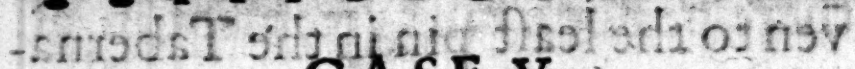
in

in the Old Testament all must bee done according to the Patterne shewed to *Moses* in the Mount, even to the least pin in the Tabernacle. So also for the Temple and the forme thereof, *David* received all in writing by the Spirit of God, 1 *Chr.* 28.12.19. No place is left, nor power given to men to invent any thing, or impose the least ceremony in the worship of God. So in the New Testament is layd downe a perfect platforme of wholesome words, which is profitable for doctrine, for reproofe, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good worke.

2 Ti. 1. 13. &
3. 16.

Secondly, as we cannot doubt but that Christ hath left an exact pre-
script forme of government in his Word, for the Church of the New
Testament; so we ought diligently
to enquire after that good old way, and
to

CASE V.



CASE V.

Effort is laid down as a perfect

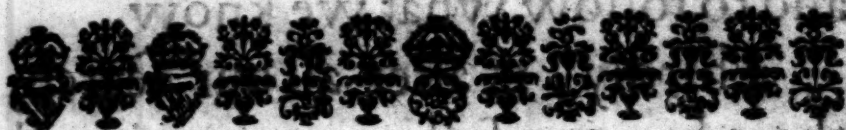
ΣΙΤΙΣ
ΔΙΕ

to finde as much of it as wee can;
and to follow what we know.

Thirdly, if after all our search,
there be not a full agreement in all
godly mens judgements, in some
things which seem somewhat more
difficult or doubtfull; we must not
therefore either reject so much as is
cleare, or yet breake Communion
and fellowship with those Churches
which differ from us in judgement
or practise, so long as they
maintaine not any government
which cannot be warranted by the
Word of God: holding that rule of
the Apostle, *Let us (saith he) as many
as be perfect, be thus minded, God shall
reveale even this unto you. Neverthe-
lesse, whereto we have already attained,
let us walke by the same rule, let us mind
the same thing.*

Phil. 3. 15, 16

CASE VI.



CASE VI.

How can the Church be without prelates, in these respects especially: 1. For ordaining of Ministers. 2. For inflicting of Censures. 3. For calling of Synods. 4. For determining of doubts arising in matters of Faith. 5. In appointing of Ceremonies. 6. For Orders sake. 7. For Confirmation of children. 8. For dedication of Churches. 9. For the forme of Doctrine.

(1)

FOR answer hereunto, First in generall, there is no need at all of any such Officers in the Church as are not of any divine Institution, as Prelats are not, as aforesaid: yea, such officers, in stead of any profitable usefulness, are most unprofitable and pernicious: as the Lord saith to false Prophets, *I have*

not

not sent them, therefore they shall not profit this people at all.

Secondly and particularly, First, Prelates are no way requisite or necessary for ordaining of Ministers: First, because they ordaine rather a new order of Priests, than true Ministers; for which cause the Booke of Ordination calls them Priests: whereas true Ministers are never called in the new Testament priests. Secondly, They ordaine no true Ministers of the Gospell (if wee may beleeve their practise) but rather a sort of dumbe Priests: for when they have ordained a full Minister, (as they call it) having put the Bible into his hand, saying, *Take thou authority to preach the Word of God*; yet for all this hee may not, must not preach at all, till he have obtained the Prelates License, which he must purchase for a good fee. Again, they make such Priests as are dumb dogs and cannot barke, being meere Ig-

(II)

D

nora-

(II)

nor amuses and Sir John Lacke-Latines; abusing those words, *Receive thou the holy Ghost: And, Take thou authority to preach the Word of God.* And lastly, They make no true Ministers of Christ, seeing they bind all with the Oath of Canonick obedience, to be subject to their lawlesse laws, in the execution of their Ministry.

Secondly, There is no use nor need of Prelates for inflicting of Censures. Their power & practise of Excommunication is altogether unlawfull, a meere usurpation, and contrary to Gods Ordinance; and that in many respects. First, because the Prelate is not the Pastor of that Congregation whose member is cut off by Excommunication. Because the Prelate doth it alone, hee or his Surrogate; and this perhaps either a Lay-man, or a dumb priest, without any consent of the people. Thirdly, he excommunicates a man for every triviall cause, & that with-

out

out due summons, & rashly, and for his fee absolves him without any repentance or reformation, & without satisfaction to the people offended. Whereas excommunication is the highest censure, & is to be done by the Minister & congregation joyntly, after much means used to reclaim the offender, & for grievous scandals; & not to be restored without hearty repentance, in a sad, serious & solemn manner. Lastly, if Prelats for the causes here alledged be of no use for the high censure of excommunication, how much lesse need is there of the for inflicting corporall or criminall punishment upon reputed Delinquents, as deprivation of liberty by imprisonment, of the ministry by deprivation, degradation, suspension, deprivation of means and livelihood, by imposing of intolerable fines, and restraining men from the exercise of their particular Calling, to the undoing of them and theirs.

Mat. 18. 17.
& 1 Cor. 5.

Thirdly, for calling of Synods, cannot this bee without a Prelate? may not this be by a Law dormant, giving liberty when occasion shall be, to have a Synod, for the better ordering whereof, a Moderator for the time being is by votes elected?

Fourthly, For determining of doubts arising in matters of Faith, what need is there for Prelats? Are they fit or competent Iudges in such things? Yea, are they not herein egregious usurpers, presumptuous and arrogant men? Yea Antichrists, in sitting thus in the Temple of God, over mens consciences, as Lords over mens faith? Is not this a meere evacuating of the authoritie and sufficiencie of the Scripture, which is the sole judge and rule of Faith? Yet this Prelates presume to doe, and challenge as their proper right: so as in the twentieth Article, which is of the Authority of the Church, these words have beene of
later

later dayes foisted in, namely, that the Church hath authority in Controversies of faith.

Fiftly, Neither in appointing of Ceremonies are Prelates needfull: Yea, for prelates or Church, or any humane power to ordaine and impose Ceremonies to binde the consciences in the worship of God, this is expressely condemned and forbidden both by Christ himselfe, and by the Prophets, and by the Apostles. Man may not impose the least Ceremony in Gods worship: if hee doe, he therein denies Christ, *Col. 2. 19.* he holds not the Head. And yet the aforesaid Article boldly affirmes saying, The Church hath power to decree Rites and Ceremonies. So as this Article, whether meaning by Church the Prelates (as they meane it) or any other humane power, ought to be to Christians no article of Faith, or binding any mans Conscience.

Mat. 15. 9.

Ecc. 29. 13.

Col. 2. 8. 18.

Sixtly, For orders sake : for what order-sake are Prelates necessary, or any way requisit ? what order they keep all men know : & what order can there be in a Babylonish government, as the prelatical altogether is ?

7. For confirmation of children: This also is a Babylonish Sacramēt; as if it did confer some grace *ex opere operato*, or some vertue dropping out of the Bishops Lawn sleeve. Indeed this confirmation is a pretty knack to win credit to the Prelacy frō the blinde Vulgar, which to everie wel taught Christian is both superstitious and ridiculous.

8 For dedication of Churches; this is a most notorious Romish, Popish superstition, & is rather a meer prophanation, than any dedication, except it be to superstition & idolatry, as they at Rome do use their Temples: & they would make the world beleeve, that by their many superstitious ceremonies, in crossings, censings,

sings, adorations, & the like, which they use in their dedication, there goes forth a vertue, by which holynesse is infused into the wals & pews, especially into their sacred chancel.

Ninthly, for the form of Liturgy, if we goe no farther than our Service booke, which is an extract out of Romes Latine service, Missall, or Masse-booke, as it is confessed in the Booke of Martyrs, the Romane Latine being turned into English: if there were no more in it than this, that it is the forme of Romes Worship, and so (as King *James* once called it) an ill sayd Masse, it might a little startle such Christians, as hold that Christianity to be the purest, which hath least conformitie with Antichrist and his superstitions. For if wee be commanded to come out of Rome, & to have no communion with her idolatrous service; let it then be well considered, whether Christians may with a good con-

Vol. 2. p. 667.
print. ed. 1631

Old. 4. 1631
Old. 4. 1631

conscience be present at the English Liturgy, which is for the maine, the Masse turned into English. For although it be objected, that it is purged from the Popish drosse, yet if it should be brought to the Touchstone, or tried in the Text, let the wisest then judge how free from Popish drosse it is, when therein they shall finde Romish superstitious Ceremonies maintained and prest upon mens consciences, as the Surplice, Crosse in Baptisme, kneeling at the Sacrament, standing at the Creed, attended with their severall significations, as if man had a power to set up any significant Ceremonies in Gods worship, when as wee finde all kinde of signes and ceremonies in Gods service under the Old Testament, though ordained by God himselfe, to be utterly abolished by Christ, and forbidden to Christians under the New Testament: and much more all such as
are

Gal. 4. 9, 10.
Col. 2. 16.

are of humane invention: all which are of that nature, as the Apostle calls them, the *Yoke of Bondage*, to such as are intangled therein; exhorting all Christians to stand fast in the libertie wherewith Christ hath made us free. And *Col. 2.* he plainly shewes all such ordinances to be an evacuation of Christs death, and so an apostacie from Christ. And no Christian, I hope, will plead for the use of humane ordinances in Gods worship, when Christ hath abrogated all ceremonies of divine institution, and hath left no footstep for any one Ceremonie in the New Testament, and flatly condemns all commandements of men in Gods Service: It beeing also a strange presumption for any man to think, that either he hath authority to prescribe how God should bee worshipped, or that God should be pleased with any such will-worship; when instead of being pleased, hee saith, *In*

Gal. 5. 1.

E

vaine

vain they worship me, teaching for Doctrine the Comments of men. For surely with vaine worship God is neither pleased nor honoured.

Againe, seeing we are here fallen upon the consideration or examination of the Service booke, let all wise hearted and well instructed schollers in Christs schoole, that have learned the art of separating the pretious from the vile: but tell me what they think of Apoeryphall bookes, publicuely read in Churches, as if they were the holy Scriptures? What of the whole Letanie, so stuffed with Tautologies or vain repetitions? What of the prayer in the Letanie and of the Collect, wherein Bishops or Prelates are prayed for, being Antichristian and false Bishops; and all other Ministers are prayed for, as being the Curates of those Bishops: than which what can be a greater reproach and shame to the Ministers of the Church

Church of England? What of so many carvings of Scriptures into Epistles and Gospels, with their severall Collects, for the maintenance and celebration of Saints days, called Holydayes? What of the lame and incongruous, yea senseles translations of those sundry Scriptures with the Psalmes? What of prayers at the buriall of the Dead? What of Churching of women, *alias*, Their Purification, as some call it, and which answers to that under the Law? What of Priestly absolution? with many more particulars, too long here to rehearse. And in a word, What of so many prayers injoynd to be read, enough to blunt the edge of any true devotion, and so to tyre out the strongest sided Minister, as hee hath neither strength nor time left for Gods Ordinance, namely the preaching of the Word. And (to say the very truth) this kind of long Service was devised by the

Popes successively, to that very end, namely to entertaine the people with a blinde devotion, and to retaine them in ignorance, when now no roome was left for preaching, which was by this meanes thrust by the head and shoulders out of their Churches. And thus what a deale of pretious time is taken up with a long, dull, and dead forme of prayer, which might and ought to be spent to the edification of Gods people on the Lords owne Day, which should be sanctified not in humane devises, but in Gods owne Ordinances, to the glory of Him who is the Lord of the day. I say againe (for I speake nothing definitively, as passing myne own private judgement of these things) let this wise and grave Senate (now assembled for a thorow-reformation, and removall of all abuses and grievances primarily in the matters of God and of Christ, maturely judge.

CASE



CASE VII.

*Whether any set forme of a Liturgie
or publique Prayer be necessarie to bee
used in the publique Worship of God?*

FOr answer: Indeed if it bee necessary to have unpreaching Ministers, and dumb dogs over the people of the Lord, who can nor preach nor pray, then it will bee no lesse necessary to have some form of Booke prayers or Liturgy for such to officiate by. And for this cause the Prelates have had some reason to hold up their Liturgy to the full, as without which there had beene nothing for their Mutes to do in the Church. Now though dumbe Priests have need of such a Liturgy, yet it doth not follow, that therefore able godly Ministers, that know
how

1 Theff. 5.

1 Cor. 14. 15

how to fit their prayers to all such severall occasions as do continually present themselves (which a set prayer in a booke cannot do) should be tied to any such precise set forme. For otherwise, this were to quench the spirit of prayer, and to muzzle the mouth of prayer, and to stoppe the course of Gods spirit, which doth wonderfully improve it self in all those both Ministers and people, on whom God hath powred the spirit of grace and supplication, and who do by daily exercise grow unto such a habit of prayer, and which doth powre it self forth in such a life and power, as is not possible for any set read prayer to exercise or have. For true, fervent, effectuell prayer is that which is the hearts expression by the Spirit of God. As the Apostle saith, *I will pray with my Spirit.* And (*Phil. 19.*) *Prayer is supplied by the Spirit of Jesus Christ.* This is that prayer which is first in the
 word heart,

heart, before it come to the mouth, and is dictated by Gods spirit, before it be uttered with the lippes: whereas a read prayer is in the mouth before it can come unto the heart, which in prayer is a speaking unadvisedly with the lips, before the heart hath first digested and suggested the matter. This is an abortive birth which never had a right conception, But a godly Minister that is best acquainted with the state of his flocke, and of the church of God, can accordingly so enlarge and apply his prayer, by the supply of Gods spirit, as may be most usefull to the Congregation, as beeing most accomodate to their spirits, when they finde the matter of the prayer to be that, the want whereof they are most sencible of: so as there is here a concurrence of the spirits both of the Minister and people, which causeth a prayer to bee so much the more effectuall, lively, power-

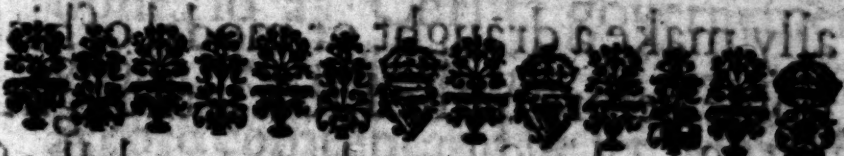
powerfull, and operative, and that not onely with God, but in the hearts of all those whose joint prayer it is. Whereas a read prayer is in comparison, a dead and dull formal prayer, without any life or power either to prevaile with God, or to profit the people: as beeing such a prayer as suits only such Readers as are destitute of the spirit of Grace, and supplication, and of faith and sanctification, and therefore such as God regardeth not. So as a true Minister of Christ ought not to be tyed with the bonds and lines of a written forme of prayer that must bee read, forasmuch as hereby the spirit of prayer in him is bound up, and both he and the people of God deprived both of the benefit of such a gift, and of that profit also which the prevailing prayer of Christs spirit procures of God. Yea, not even a set written prayer which the Minister makes, & saith by heart, though he

he reade it not; And though it be
better to say it by heart, than to read
it out of a booke, yet it can be so
lively and powerfull as that prayer
which is not tied to a set forme of
words. From such a prayer as is ut-
tered by heart (as we say) the me-
mory is more exercised, than the
understanding and affections with-
in him, there being now a suspen-
sion of that worke of the spirit of
supplication and grace, which brea-
theth forth with a lively power in
a conceived prayer, wherein not the
memory so much, as the whole
mind, soule, spirit, & affections, have
their joint operation. *bellio rex lew*

But it may be objected, That the
Reformed Protestant Churches be-
yond the seas have their set formes
of publique prayer and sacraments.
True: but I take it that the Mini-
sters are not tied to those formes, fur-
ther than they will themselves. As
we see the Ministers of the Kirke of

Scotland now in England, use no
 set formes of prayer, but doe dis-
 charge the duty of prayer with an
 excellent freedom of spirit, & with
 such an apt accommodation thereof
 to the present condition of the hear-
 ers, and (of the state of Gods church,
 as that it serves greatly to the edifi-
 cation and raising up of the spirits
 of Gods people sympathising with
 it, and is fittest (of all other kindes of
 prayer) to speed with the Prayer-
 hearing God, who best knowes the
 meaning and language of that spirit
 of his, by which such prayers are
 poured forth. And surely were this
 well exercised by our Ministers in
 England, in publique, as I know it
 is by many both Ministers & peo-
 ple in private, it would no doubt
 much facilitate and hasten the ac-
 complishment of that great worke
 of a thorow reformation, so happi-
 ly begun, and hopefully proceeded
 in, if flesh and bloud bee not too
 much

much consulted with, and humane
policy (which should have no hand
in setting out or authorising any de-
vised forme of Gods worship, im-
posed on the conscience) too much
relied upon.



CASE VIII.

*What is the most ready and easie way
or Method, of finding out or obtaining
Christs government?*

FOR resolution: It is usuall with
those that stand for the Hierar-
chy, to stop all ways of finding
this out, by laying many stumbling
blocks in our way. But if we will
goe roundly to worke, first of all, of
necessity all false government, as
that of the Hierarchy, must be quite
taken out of the way, as the maine
stumbling block. As hee that in-

tends to build a new house in the place where the old standeth, must first pull down the old, and raise it from the very foundation, that hee may lay a new foundation to beare up the new fabricke. But because he that thus intends to build, doth usually make a draught or model of his house before named: so it is thought necessary by some, that a modell of Christs government be first drawn up, according to which the new fabrick may be in a readinesse to be erected presently upon the removal of the old.

This indeed stands with good reason, especially for the satisfaction of all doubts, and for the better accommodation of the Church, and as a preparation of the materials to the more speedy setting forward of the worke of Reformation. And yet this I dare say, That if in the first place the Hierarchy, with all the trumphy and baggage of their Ceremonies

ceremonies & will worship in Gods
 service, were quite abandoned and
 taken away, so as the ground where
 these degenerate plants doe grow,
 were cleared and purged, that not a
 root of them were left, the work of
 Reformation were more than halfe
 done; so as Christs government
 would even *sponte sua*, of its owne
 accord come in, and be set up with-
 out the noyse of so much as a ham-
 mer; especially in all such Congre-
 gations where godly and discreet
 Ministers are. Yet not so, as that
 we can expect such a perfection at
 the first, specially in this land, which
 hath been so long pestered and cor-
 rupted with the tyrannous and li-
 cencious prophane government of
 the Prelates; and where godly Mi-
 nisters are so scarce, and most men
 through long custome, and want of
 meanes (as before) are not, by reason
 of ignorance (though perhaps too
 quicke sighted in worldly matters)

so well fitted to apprehend, and to entertain such an exact government as God requires, and his Word prescribes.



CASE IX.

Whether, though the Prelacy with its usurped jurisdiction, Lordships, Temporalities, Power, Pompe, &c. be quite removed out of the wayes, yet it be not expedient at least, if not necessary, to retain the name of Bishops, as a title appointed to those who are to be the principall among, and above other Ecclesiasticall persons in the government of the Church?

FOr answer: First, we ought not to abuse those titles which the Scripture appropriates and ties to the persons and office of the true Pastors of the Church, by impropriating

ating them from the true owners,
 and transferring them to such, as at
 the best (being considered as Pa-
 stors over their severall Congrega-
 tions respectively) have but a com-
 mon right with other Pastors, and
 no peculiar title as proper to them-
 selves alone. And wherefore shall
 such onely be still called Bishops
 more than others? As having the
 only oversight over all other Chur-
 ches, and their Ministers, and that
 by being invested in a perpetuity of
 such a dignity? What is this, but a
 clipping of those wings, and a pay-
 ring of those claws, which will in
 time grow againe. * Can the *Athyo-*
pian change his skinn? or the *Leopard*
his spots? Can we so quickly forget,
 what spirit the spirituall ambition
 of these men is of? Or can we ima-
 gine that they will leave their old
 haunt, in frequenting the Court, and
 in courting the favor of great ones?
 and from whose corrupt flatteries
 not

Ier.

not the cares of the best Princes can plead an exemption? And may wee not justly feare, that if but the stump of this banefull tree be left unstubb'd up by the roots, so as not so much as the bare long usurped name thereof do remaine, may not the root still spread it selfe under ground insensibly? and the stem through the sent of water put forth such sprouts and fruits; as by the bitterness thereof the whole land may be troubled? And may it not be just with God, yet againe to bring more plagues upon this State, by its suffering of such miscreant remainders, when hee had given so faire an opportunity to cut them off, root and branch? Did not *Saul* for sparing one *Agag* lose his kingdome? And did not *Abab* for sparing the life of his false brother *Benhadad* lose his owne life? And were not those *Canaanites* thornes and prickes in the *Israelites* eyes and sides? Nor is it so small

Heb. 12.

1 Sam.

1 King.

small a matter to alienate the property of a name or title from the right owners, to whom alone God hath made it peculiar and proper: For such an alienation is an alteration not onely of the true property of the name, but also of the nature of that office to which it was first given of God. For (as is shewed before) the name of Bishop is proper *quarto modo*, to every Pastor over that Congregation to which hee is lawfully called: and the name *Episcopus*, or in English, Bishop or Over-seer, sets forth the office of such a Pastor over his flocke. So as to take away this name from the Pastor, and to appropriate it to one single man set over other Ministers, to wit, one that is by man stiled and denominated a Diocesan Bishop; What is this but utterly to pervert & overthrow Christs ordinance, and the nature of his true Church, and the office of a true Pastor, who being stripped of

G

his

his proper title, is withall stript of his office, and so of his flock, where of another now is made the Overseer or Bishop, and the title and Office of a Curate onely is left him, according to the Collect for Bishops and Curates. Or if there be a mental reservation to every Minister of a congregation, of the office of Pastorship; yet when the title of Bishop is given to one above him, even thus also is an invasion made upon Christs owne title and prerogative, who is the onely *Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος* the chiefe Shepheard or chiefe Bishop of his Church, besides whom and above whom all the Pastors acknowledge none. And if of Pastors, some onely be called Bishops, and the rest not, here also Christs sheepehook is wrung out of his hand, as where he is called *the Shepheard and Bishop of our soules*. So easie a thing it is by the alienation or impropriation of a name, to set up such an

1 pet. 5. 4.

1 Pet. 2. 25.

an office and government in the Church, as wherby Christs government & the proper office of his true Ministers, are cast to the ground & trampled under foot.

Moreover, if ever this government of Bishops, falsely so called, shall bee set up or continued in manner aforesaid, yet farre bee it from those Worthies of the land, whose justice is so cleare and unpartiall in other things, and namely in the cutting off of all Monopolies in the civill State, to erect or ratifie, or any way to countenance such a Monopoly in Christs kingdome, so derogatory to his incommunicable prerogative, and to that stile and office wherein he hath so highly dignified and intrusted all faithful Ministers. For what a Monopoly is this, to take away the title wherein the Office of all true Pastors is comprehended, and to transfer it to one alone among many?

Ob. But here it may be objected, That the Reformed Churches beyond the seas, as even Geneva it selfe, have their Overseers, which is a title and office equivalent to our Dioce-
san Bishops, *Episcopus* signifying an Overseer: why then is it not as law-
full to have the like in England?

I answer: The case is farre differ-
rent; for such Overseers or Modera-
tors, as in other reformed Churches
they are called (as in the Kirke of
Scotland) are chosen by the Mini-
sters and Elders, and that but for
one yeare, and whose office is to call
the Synods at certaine fixed times,
and to collect the votes, & the like.
But some say, that our usurping Bi-
shops shall bee perpetuall for their
lives; and how farre the power of
their place and dignity may be ex-
tended, especially when they have
their election from the Court, ei-
ther immediate and absolute *per se*,
or by the means of a *Conge de lier*, as
whom

whom so designed above, the Ministers of the Diocesse (in stead of the Deane and Chapter) are bound to elect. Or if they be but Triennial, & so to come under the visitation of a Triennial Parliament; yet who knows but such spirits may so work as in time to make Parliaments as geason as heretofore: when some of them have confessed, that they never dreamed to see a Parliament againe. Or if they shall be continued from three yeare to three yeare, yet this is also more than is used in forreine Reformed Churches. And however, for them to retaine the name of Bishop still (as before) is against Gods Word, and not onely derogatory to Christs true Ministers for the present, but also very prejudiciall to their liberty, when such Bishops holding their favor in Court, and their nearnesse to the Chaire of State, may by that means grow awfull to those their Curates,

among whom some, and perhaps too many, may be found ready to prostitute their officiousness unto their Bishop, instead of Christ, out of a hope to be made the heires apparent of the Bishopricke; which though it be now cropt and deplumed, yet will be still a bait for ambition, which must be doing, and will rather play small game than sit out. All which considered, I leave it to the Wise to judge what may be the consequents thereof, & whether by this means either we or our children may come to see as great corruption both in doctrine and manners, as now we doe. For (as I sayd before) the time may come, when God in his justice may deny this State the like opportunity (so armed with a necessity of reformation, as we neither could have wished, nor any more can hope for) to reforme Episcopall insolencie. Or suppose a possibility of Prelates to become no worse

worse than as the Parliament shall
 leave them, yet the least rag of Pre-
 lacie making a rent in Christs coat,
 (as it beeing the head of such a Go-
 vernment as is condemned by the
 Word of God) ought no more to be
 pieced to Christs livery, seeing it de-
 stroyeth Christian liberty, both in
 Ministers and people. And all this
 (I say) ariseth from the very name
 of Bishop so misplaced, for which
 cause it ought to be with the whole
 Bishopricke utterly extirped, and
 that no lesse, than the heathen Ro-
 mans rooted out the very name of
 the *Turquins* for the tyranny, which
 they had exercised. For

unto them. For

some of those articles which are ve-

ry tales; as Article 20, which saith,

The Church hath power to decree Rites

and Ceremonies, and authoritie in con-

troverters of faith. Both which are

added since the same article was

first made in King Edward the first

his

CASE X.

CASE X.

Whether the whole Hierarchie being abolished, the 39 Articles which were agreed upon in 62, by the Archbishops and Bishops, &c. in both Provinces, doe any longer binde? or that Ministers are bound to subscribe unto them?

I Answer: First, That these 39 Articles taken conjunctly together, no man can with a good conscience, rightly informed, subscribe unto them. For secondly, There be some of those articles which are very false; as Article 20, which saith, *The Church hath power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of faith.* Both which are false (as before is noted) and were added since the same article was first made in King Edward the sixt his

his dayes. Againe the 26 Article is
 no lesse false which saith, *The booke
 of ordination of Archbishops and Bi-
 shops; and ordering of Priests, &c. doth
 containe all things necessary to such con-
 secration and ordering.* Neither hath it
 anything that of it selfe is superstitious
 and ungodly. And therefore all so con-
 secrated and ordered according to the
 Rites prescribed &c. wee decree to bee
 rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecra-
 ted and ordered. Now to this article
 all Ministers subscribe, although
 they be false Bishops consecrated af-
 ter the order of Rome, and false
 Priests that are by false bishops so
 ordered.

Thirdly, Art. 3. it is sayd, *As Christ
 died for us, and was buried; so is it to
 be beleev'd that he went down into hell.*
 Which going downe into hell im-
 ports a locall going downe into the
 place of hell; which hath no proof
 in Scripture, nor holds any propor-
 tion or analogie of faith, but cros-

H

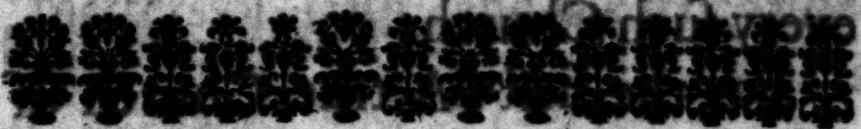
seth

seth the truth of Scripture, and the current of all sound interpreters, and therefore not to bee beleaved as Christs death and buriall.

Fourthly, some Articles are made of late by the enemies of grace, the Prelates, of so doubtfull and double a sence (as those especially about Grace and Freewill) that they have procured a Declaration prefixed before the Articles, in the Kings name, prohibiting the free preaching of those points according to the Scriptures. So as Ministers cannot resolve what it is they subscribe unto in the sayd Article. And therefore it is necessary that the said false Articles be wholly expunged, and the doubtful (as they pretend) more fully explained; and so the said Declaration prefixed, taken away.

CASE

which Christ hath appointed over



CASE XI.

Now all this done, and the whole Antichristian yoke in the Prelacy, with the burthen of all their Rites and Ceremonies removed from Christians neckes: what is that particular form of government which is to be set up?

For answer: First we premised something hereof in generall, namely, That Christs government alone is to be set up in all true Christian congregations, and so his yoke to be borne, as our glory, upon our neckes. But secondly, for further, and a more particular unfolding of this government of Christ over every true Church or congregation: First we are to enquire what the true Church of Christ is. And secondly, what is that government

which Christ hath appointed over every such Church.

For the first: A true Church of Christ is a congregation of true believers men and women, who by the Word of God preached, are separated from the world, and the reigning lusts thereof, and declared to be such by the open profession of the true and right faith, and by the conversation of Christian life conformable thereunto. Such is a particular visible true Church or Congregation, and so is (as farre as wee can judge) a true branch of the holy Catholique Church, which is invisible, comprehending the number of Gods Elect, and is apprehended only by faith, & not by sight. Now every such particular Congregation as aforesaid, consisting of professed believers of the knowne truth of God, according to which they frame the course of their life and conversation, is in it selfe an absolute Church,

Church, whose onely Governor for matters of faith, and the true worship of God, is Iesus Christ. He it is that as King reigneth in this congregation, and in all the members thereof, they acknowledge none other Governor for matters of Religion, but Christ onely. For herein stands his kingly Office: and the Laws by which this King reigneth, and governeth his Church, is his written Word. And his Vicegerent, by whom Christ is alwayes present with every one of his severall Congregations, is the holy Ghost, which whose hath not is none of Christ.

Now having thus defined what a true Church of Christ is, namely a congregation professing the known true faith, every member thereof being able in some measure to give a reason of the maine points of faith, and to make prooffe of their profession by walking in a holy course of life: hence it appeares who they be

de. 3A

Rom. 8.

Act. 26.

that are not admitted to bee members of this congregation or church of Christ, therein to participate of the holy Sacrament, untill their repentance and reformation; namely all ignorant and prophane persons, which neither beleve aright, nor live accordingly. For the congregation of Christ is called the Communion of Saints, being sanctified by faith in Christ, and by his word and Spirit.

Rom. 8.

The second thing is, to enquire and consider how this Church of Christ is to be governed. To finde this out is no difficulty. First, sure it is, that none but Christ is supreme and immediate Lord, King, and Governor of his Church, whether of the Catholique, or of every particular church or congregation rightly constituted (as aforesaid) so as no power on earth hath any authority to prescribe Lawes for the government of this Church, whether for doctrine

doctrine or discipline, whether for
 faith or worship, but onely Christ,
 whose writtten Word and Law is
 the onely rule of this government;
 which Law all Princes (who are
 therefore called *Custodes utriusq; Ta-
 bula*) are bound by him, whose
 Vicegerents they are, to see well ob-
 served both by Ministers and peo-
 ple. Here then wee will speake of
 the Officers which Christ hath
 appointed over every Christian con-
 gregation: and those are either Mi-
 nisters or other officers of the peo-
 ple. First for the Ministers, they are
 called by sundry titles, as (a) Bishops
 or Presbyters, (b) Pastors and Tea-
 chers, (c) Ministers, (d) Labourers,
 and the like. Their principall office
 is to pray, to preach the word, to
 administer the Sacraments. And
 these Ministers, however stiled in
 Scripture, are all of equall authority,
 not one over another, nor one over
 many, nor many over one, each be-
 ing

2 A& 20.
 Tit. 1. 5. 7.
 Eph. 4. 11.
 6 Luk. 2.
 2 Cor. 11. 23.
 4 Luk. 10. 7.
 1 Cor. 3. 9.
 A& 6. 4.
 Mar. 28. 20.
 A& 20. 7.
 Mar. 20. 25.
 26.

Heb. 13. 17.

Quest.

ing in his place & peculiar congregation under Christ alone, as the King of his Church, to whom he is accountable: and under Christ, to the civill Magistrate, as being a subject.

But here a question may be moved, whether a Synod of Ministers, or of the churches, have not power over any one Minister, and so over all the Congregations, either to censure particular persons or congregations, or to prescribe and impose orders, Rites, Canons, or the like?

Ans.

For answer: Some are of opinion that a Synod hath authoritie to binde particular churches to such rites as they shall prescribe and impose. And they alledge that Synod or assembly of the Apostles, wherein were determined certaine observances which they sent and imposed on the churches of the new convert Gentiles, as necessary for them to observe, some wherof were Iewish

Jewish ceremonies. Hence they conclude, That a Synod collected of the churches, hath power over particular churches, to ordaine and impose ceremonies as necessary to be observed. But this act of the Apostles is no president or patterne for succeeding ages. The reason is first, because the Apostles were inspired with the holy Ghost, which wholly guided them in all matters of the Church; so as in that their determination they say expressly, *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burthen.* Now what Synod in any age after the Apostles could ever say, that they were infallibly inspired and assisted by the holy Ghost? If any can infallibly assure me hereof, that a Synod after the Apostles cannot erre, but that they can truly say, *It pleased the holy Ghost and us:* then I will obey all their Decrees.

Secondly, That injunction of the
I holy

Act. 15. 28.

A.C. 15. 21.

holy Ghost and of the Apostles was but *προσστασις*, for that present time, for the avoyding of offences betweene Iewes and Gentiles, who in every city conversed together : Which *James* the Apostle alledgeth for the only reason of that determination. But we reade not in all the writings of the Apostles afterward, that they either ordained or imposed the least rite or ceremonie to be observed in any of the Churches of God ; yea, they expressely condemned all such ordinances, as before is shewed.

A But here another question ariseth : If particular congregations be not subject to be ruled by Synods, or the like jurisdiction, what order can be expected, or what meanes is left for ordaining of Ministers over every congregation ?

For answer, briefly : First for order ; What better or surer order can be, than that which Christs

yol

I

Word

Word hath set down ? And if in any thing doubts arise in a Congregation, they have other congregations with the Ministers to consult with. For although every particular congregation be an absolute church, having no jurisdiction over it but Christs alone, and that immediatly ; yet it is not separated or divided from the neighbour churches, so as that it should not hold communion with them, or a consociation, communicating together in all mutuall offices of helpe, counsel, comfort, resolution in doubts, advice in difficulties, and the like : this beeing the priviledge and benefit of the communion of Saints, which is not limited to one particular congregation onely within it selfe, but comprehendeth all the Members of the Catholique church, wheresoever they are visible in any assemblies: so as if any one congregation fall into an errour, it is by others to bee ad-

monished and conuined, that it may be reformed. If it fall into any foule heresie (which yet is not easie in a well constituted Church) it must bee dealt withall accordingly as the case shal require: the churches assembled must labour to reduce it, and if after all meanes it prooue incorrigible, when there is no remedie they must renounce communion with that congregation. And if that congregation shall bee further troublesome, in breaking the peace of the Churches, or of the civil state, it is liable to such punishments as by the good lawes of the land are allotted to such and such offences. For although no power on earth hath power over mens consciences in matters of religion, yet God hath in his ordinance set up civil powers and Magistrates, whom he hath armed with authority to punish such as doe openly transgresse either the Lawes of God, or the just Lawes of the

Rom. 13.

the civil state. For the Magistrate is Gods Minister, both for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise and protection of them that doe well. And for the better and more easie way for the civill Power to take cognisance of things of that nature, it will become the duty of all the churches, in a Synod or otherwise to convince the parties offending, and if obstinate, to complaine of them to the civill Magistrate. Thus it is with a congregation as it stands in relation to other Churches, and in a subjection to the civill power.

Now for a congregation considered in it selfe, if a member thereof do offend in any kinde, what is to be done, or who shall censure it? I answer: If the offence bee against the Law of Christ, or his government over that congregation, then the same congregation hath power given from Christ to censure the Delinquent, when after all due means

1 Pet. 2. 14.

means he remains obstinate and incorrigible; as 1 Cor. 5. But if the offence be against the law of the civil State, he is then punishable according to that law, by the civil Magistrate.

But here another question ariseth, Whether the Minister or Pastor of the congregation alone have power of censure committed unto him, or together with the congregation?

I answer: Together with the congregation; which therefore electeth certaine officers, such as are most eminent for integrity, gravity, holiness, knowledge, and judgement in matters of the congregation, to represent the congregation, and to assist the Minister in government and correction of manners: And who fitter to take knowledge of home-delinquents, than such as best know them? And who are likeliest to use mercy, compassion, and moderation in such censures,

and

and better means of the delinquents amendment, than such as are their godly neighbours?

And these officers, either for the gravity of their yeares or manners, are called Elders. The * Prelats cannot endure the name of lay Elders; but in Scripture we find them. For $\pi\rho\epsilon\sigma\beta\upsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\omega$, an Elder, is taken both for a Minister of the Word, and for a Lay Elder, as they call it: as *Tim. 5.17. Let the Elders that rule well, be accounted worthy of double honor, especially they who labour in the Word and doctrine.* Where Elders plainly signify both such as rule, and such as preach, distinct one from the other. So *Rom. 12. 6, 7, 8. He that ruleth is a distinct officer from him that teacheth & prophesieth.* And so, *1 Cor. 12. 28. After Prophets or Teachers, are set Helps, governments, or helps in government, as our Translation hath it. These Governors then simply considered, were not Ministers*
of

D. Hall, in his
Episcopacy
by Divine
right.

of the Word, but Lay men, as they call them. We could produce some Antients that speake of these lay governors or Seniors; but at present for brevities sake wee omit them. The ancient Church of the Jewes had such Elders, as we reade, called Masters of the Synagogue, *Act. 13. 15.* And if antiently, in and after the Apostles time, there were not such Elders, how came it to passe afterward under Antichrist, that the government of every particular congregation was delivered unto those of the Laity, whom we call churchwardens and Side men, who are to assist the Minister in matters of the Church, though not in matter of censure, which the Prelacy hath wholly usurped and monopolized to it selfe, having thrust out and utterly exterminated, as much as in them lieth, the very name and memory of Lay Elders, had wee not some records thereof in the lasting monu-

D. Hall, in his
Episcopacy
by Divine
right

monuments of the Scripture: & Yea,
 let the Prelates tell us, how all that
 Lay Eldership (as I may call it) of
 Chancellors, Commissaries, and the
 rest, came to be set up, but to supply
 (in some sort) those ancient Lay El-
 ders, whom the Apostles had set up,
 and whom Antichrist puld down,
 as being the main hinderance of the
 setting up of his Hierarchy? For
 how had the Prelacie mounted to
 that height of power over the
 whole Church, had the Lay Elders
 still continued in governing, with
 godly Ministers, the several congre-
 gations respectively? Also as the re-
 moving of the Lay Elders, and the
 bringing in of Churchwardens and
 other Lay Officers into the church,
 all subject to the Prelates jurisdic-
 tion, and made their sworne vassals,
 was the very up-setting of the Anti-
 christian Throne in the Temple of
 God. And this is that order of go-
 vernment, without which the Pre-

lates cry out, There is no order. Whereas that order which the Apostles left, in governing the Church by Ministers and Lay officers, is the only true Order. Those words of Christ, *Go tell it to the Church*, doe shew, That censure of incorrigible faults was in the power of every Congregation. So 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5. &c.

In the second place, to the former question concerning the ordaining of Ministers in every congregation, in case there be neither Diocesan Bishops, nor Synods to perform it: I answer, first, That most men doe greatly mistake that here which they call Ordination of Ministers. The Romanists have scrved it up to one of their seven Sacraments, making the Imposition of hands upon the Priests head by the Prelate, to be the outward signe of that inward grace, which *ex opere operato* (as they say) is conferred upon the Priest.

And

And even many Protestants are of opinion, that Ordination cannot be performed but by a Prelate, or at least by Ministers onely, as without whose imposition of hands it were no Ordination, or as if it did confer such an order. Whereas the prime and proper conferring of this Order is by Christ himselfe, inwardly calling and gifting a man for the work of the Ministry.

Secondly then, what is that *χειροτομία*, ordaining and appointing of Ministers? and *ἐπιθεσις τῶν χειρῶν*, the Imposition of hands, which the Scripture speaks of? I answer: *χειροτομία*, signifying properly a stretching out of the hand, it was used either in lifting up of the hands in token of suffrage in election of officers, or in stretching out of the hand upon the head of the man chosen, for confirmation. Also when it was used by the Apostles, it pleased God to bestow there

Act. 8. 17.
Mar. 16. 18.

with the gifts of the holy Ghost, and on some recovery of health. This was very frequent in the Apostles times : But afterwards in successive ages there was no such gift annexed to the laying on of hands. Secondly, Therefore it was of use according to its antient and ordinary custome in sufferages in elections of officers, to declare assent and approbation of those for such and such places, when after prayer hands were layd on them.

But by whom was this Imposition of hands used at the choice of Ministers ? I answer, By those who gave their sufferages or votes to the election; and those were sometime the congregation it selfe, and sometime others at their request joyning with them: as we read, Act. cap. 6. 5, 6. And all Ecclesiasticall stories tell us, that antiently the election of Ministers was by every congregati-
on respectively. So as to them also
of

of right belonged the laying of their hands, as a token of their approbation and confirmation of him that was so chosen to that office. And though we read in one place, That the Apostle layd his hands upon Timothy, as 2 Tim. 1. 6. yet in another we read, (as 1 Tim. 4. 14.) that the Presbyterie layd their hands upon him. Which Presbyterie comprehends as well the Elders of the people, as those of the Ministry. Accordingly, wee exclude not the Elders or Ministers of other neighboring congregations from joyning in that worke, for assistance especially in prayer, for a blessing upon the new chosen Minister. For so farre must we be from excluding any in this kinde, that wee highly commend consociation and communication of gifts for assistance, where it may be conveniently had. Onely reserving to each congregation that peculiar interest and right, which

every true Church of Christ hath in chusing their owne Ministers, and other Church officers.

And this stands with good reason: for not onely antiquity both in and from the Apostles times pleadeth for this, but even naturall reason and equity. For reason willeth that such as chuse should ratifie.

Secondly, Those who give the maintenance should chuse the Officer.

Thirdly, Who have commonly better Ministers than those Congregations, that upon good advice and counsell chuse them themselves.

Fourthly, Where is greater love betweene Minister and people, than where the liberty of such a choyce is enjoyed.

Fifthly, What vertue at any time doth a Prelates imposition of hands adde to Ministers so ordained by him? Or what bee those Ministers whom Prelates usually place over the

the people? And I would aske any reasonable Christian, whether hee would not rather have the approbation, prayer, and imposition of hands, of the poorest godly man, than of the most glorious Prelate? Yea, though hee were stiled even Grace it selfe? For as James saith, *The effectuall fervent prayer of a righteous man prevaileth much.* It is not sayd, The prayer of a great or learned man.

Iam. 5. 16.

Or answer in general: First in general, it is agreeable to good and approved examples in Scripture, to make firm leagues and faithful Covenants for the maintenance of the true faith and religion of Christ. See for this 2 Corow. 12. 13. and Chapter 24. 31. 32. 33. Extra 10. 3. Newm.

CASE

Secondly, in particular, I stand both

the people? And I would aske any
reasonable Christian, whether hee



than of the most glorious Prelate?
Yea, though hee be filled even

CASE XII.

How far may and ought true reformed Christian Congregations to hold communion among themselves; and with other Reformed Churches?

FOr answer in generall : First in generall, it is agreeable to good and approved examples in Scripture, to make firme leagues and faithfull Covenants for the maintenance of the true faith and religion of Christ. See for this, 2 Chron. 15. 12, 13. and Chapter 34. 31, 32, 33. Ezra 10. 3, Nehem. cap. 9. 38.

Severally, in particular : It stands both

both with Christian piety and prudence, for all the members of a particular Church or congregation, to enter into a firme covenant among themselves, to maintain a holy communion together in the profession of the truth, and practise of a holy life, as becommeth the communion of Saints.

Thirdly, It stands with the like Christian piety and prudence, to hold a sweet and inviolable bond and communion with all other churches or congregations rightly constituted, as we conceive, according to Christs ordinance, and walking according unto it.

Fourthly, If there be any Christian Churches that doe in some small circumstances differ from us, in that forme of government which wee conceive and beleve Christ hath set up in his Word, so as therein they may seem to come short of that exactnesse that is required, nor yet

L

are

are able to attain unto it, hindered in
 regard of some outward difficulty
 or human imperfection and frailty;
 the judgement being as yet not fully
 enlightened and perswaded (concer-
 ning which the Apostles rule is; Let
 every man be fully perswaded in his
 owne minde) we do notwithstanding
 ing not with-hold from them the
 right hand of fellowship; but hold
 communion with them as the
 churches of Christ; they holding the
 Orthodox Truth, and the substance
 of the government, which is due
 to the Church of Christ, and joy-
 ning with us against the Common
 Adversaries of the Gospel; conclu-
 ding with that excellent saying of
 our Saviour Christ, *They that are not a-
 gainst us, are on our part.*

Mark. 9. 40.

form of government which we
 conceive and beleeve Christ hath
 set up in his Word, so as therein
 they may seem to come short of that
 exactness that is required; not yet

conscience, will not so be resisted



shall minded, who favour not the

things of Christ: yet my conscience

The EPILOGUE

Conclusion.

affected to be affected to be

will love not the Lord Jesus Christ

Having thus freely and faith-

fully (though briefly, as

the present straits of time

would permit) declared what I

have and doe conceive and believe

concerning Christs kingdome, and

that forme and frame of the govern-

ment thereof, in this Church, as I

finde it recorded in the Scripture,

whereof I am in my conscience ful-

ly perswaded: as my earnest prayer

and trust is, That Christ by his spi-

rit and Word will leade his into all

truth necessary to salvation: so my

hope is, that however perhaps those

things which I have here delivered

according to the simplicity of my

1 Cor. 16. 22.

2 Tim. 1. 3.

conscience, will not so bee relished of all, but that they wil seem bitter, especially to the ignorant and carnall minded, who favour not the things of Christ: yet my confidence is, that all the wise hearted and wel affected to Iesus Christ (For, *If any man love not the Lord Iesus Christ, (that is, love not to have Iesus Christ set up as Lord over their soules) let him be Anathema Maranatha*) will embrace Christs yoke, and to the uttermost of their power labour to advance his throne in all Churches; or if that, through Sathans malice cannot bee effected, yet that they will set him up as sole Lord and King over their owne soules, and so will joyne in communion with all those that doe or shall desire heere to serve Iesus Christ according to that purity of conscience which is required in every true Christian (as the Apostle professed of himselfe) and in that way wherein the name of

of Christ shall bee most magnified,
and his kingdome exalted heere on
earth.

And this shall the better be done,
if a Law be made this present Par-
liament, that as Antichrists king-
dome in the Prelacy shall and must
be cast out, so Christs kingdom may
bee freely set up in this kingdome,
while his people (even as many as
will) are suffered freely to enjoy
Christs Ordinances in their pu-
ritie, and so may at length re-
cover that Christian liberty where-
with Christ hath made us free,
and for which his precious bloud
was poured forth, and whereof
this Land by the Hierarchy hath
beene till now deprived: it be-
ing our hearts desire, rather to
live under Christs government
in this our owne native Coun-
trei, than for want thereof,
bee forced to flye into forreigne
parts; where how can wee
so

So sweetly enjoy Christ, with-
out the bitter remembrance of
our Native Soile, which wee
shall never cease to wish worse
unto, than to our owne Soules.

liament, that as Antichrists king-
dome in the Prelacy shall and must
be cast out to Christs kingdom may
bee freely set up in this kingdom,

will) are invited freely to enjoy

Christs Ordinances in their pri-
vate, and so may at length re-

cover that Christian liberty where-
with Christ hath made us free,

and for which his precious blood
was shed.

this Land by the hierarchy hath
become till now deprived; it be-

ing our hearts desire, rather to
live under

in this our native Coun-
try, than to

bee forced to flye into forreigne
parts; where how can wee

to



